

Sermon
A Breathtaking View
October 15, 2006
CrossRoads

Each of us have at some point looked at a picture of something truly grand (**insert pictures of the Grand Canyon, a mountain, sunset**). and been impressed by the beauty and majesty. Some things that can take your breath away are frightening (**storm, lightening**). And there are a few out of this world breath taking spectacles (**earth, space 2x**).

However, by just looking at a picture it is really difficult to fully appreciate it not being able to take in the moment. Occasionally pictures can move us but experiencing while seeing has a more powerful and lasting impact.

I think it is sometimes like that with Jesus and the Bible. (**cross slide**).

This past Wednesday in Bible Study we took a step back from looking at pictures...studying the details, and tried to pull the pictures together to see the panorama. Sometimes it is good to take in the truly grand views of our God.

I'd like to paint a picture for you as we prepare our hearts to take communion. I hope you will come to a breathtaking view of our Lord, one I hope will renew the joy of your own salvation.

Mark 1:15

After Jesus was baptized and tested in the wilderness, he began his ministry in Galilee. The first thing he did was declare the Kingdom of God was near to the people he was talking to. He called out for all who could hear to turn from unbelief and sin and believe the good news. Have you ever thought about that? What good news? They didn't have the Bible like we have today and what we think of as the Good news of the gospel. It was the good news of God and from God that the messiah had come. You see the people had not heard from God for over 300 years. God was speaking again and said what the souls of the people had been yearning to hear...that his kingdom was near. Now there's a breathtaking moment. I believe God will speak to you today if you will listen...

What your soul has been waiting and watching for is near to you. Do you believe it?

Jesus begins answering the greatest needs of humanity one at a time...

Mark 1:25

- Then Jesus establishes authority over evil by driving out demons (Mark 1:21-34). It is interesting to note that the first movements of Jesus as messiah he established authority and power over his adversary...and ours.

Mark 1:33-34

The one who seeks to keep us from God. He drove out demons and healed sick people. In the Bible the work of evil always brought human suffering. That's what evil does. The evil one that would keep us distant from God and work to bring us down was already on the run and has been since that day! Is that good news for you? The Bible records it was absolutely breathtaking for them.

Mark 1:35. After that, Jesus took a break. He looked for a solitary place to pray. He was showing us from the start that it is vital to seek the Father's will.

Mark 1:40-41. Afterward, while preaching and driving out more demons, he answered one of our truly deepest needs. It's the huge picture of human unworthiness and shame before God. Jesus healed a leper. It is interesting to see what the leper asked Jesus to do. He didn't ask for healing he asked to be made clean if Jesus was willing. What that means can only be fully understood if we realize that a leper was an unclean, untouchable outcast and both they and their family shared the shame. The leper could not enter the temple and no one except other lepers could be in contact with them. People feared the lepers and ran from them. It was a horrible existence. There was nothing worse that could befall a person and their family. Jesus showed that it was God's desire to restore even the worst person and human condition to spiritual, emotional, social, and physical wholeness. Jesus touched him. There is nothing too bad, unclean, or unholy for Jesus...he removes whatever we believe makes us unworthy and shameful before God. There is no human depth too deep for Jesus. Is that good news for you today? In Christ there is no shame and he makes us worthy before God.

Mark 2:1-12. ... He had established authority over evil and it's oppressive hold over us, he has claimed authority over human emotional, and physical suffering and the worst of the human experience and condition, But it wasn't enough. He now comes to the heart of his purpose as the messiah, the Christ. Jesus claimed authority to forgive sin. He essentially said he can take away the guilt of sin from our disobedience and restore us to right relationship with God. In this passage Jesus heals the paralytic by forgiving his sin. He connects the spiritual sickness of sin with human paralysis or suffering. In those days there was a connection between the two. Sin paralyzed. Still does.

Suffering was evidence of sin. Have you ever wondered why we are so quick to separate sin and suffering these days? Psychology came along and told us our problems were not because we were spiritually sick but our minds...or emotions...or our environment was making us that way. Could it be as Jesus shows here that we become paralyzed because we are out of sorts with the one who created us and the purpose for which we were created? I'm not saying we can't learn from psychology...I have a degree in it. It sure is worth some thought and prayer. Jesus answered our greatest need in forgiveness

Mark 2:17 Jesus came for sinners

Mark 2:18-22

So we come to the passage for today. I know you are thinking, oh great, he's just got through the introduction! We'll never eat! Hang with me.

In all of this and from the very beginning moments Jesus knew he was not going to be with his followers for too long. He was going to die to make his followers right with God.

Jesus knew what he was establishing as the Kingdom of God was new. It was a new covenant of grace and it would not fit into the old covenant of the law. The Pharisees tried to make it fit and it made their place before and in God worse...They had become rigid and it burst their ability to understand and accept what God was doing driving them father away.

And so it is for us. We can't try to fit Jesus into our old ways of living, thinking, and seeking God.

So as we come to communion this morning Jesus is here to let you know...if you struggle because the enemy keeps tripping you up, tossing obstacles into your life, bringing you down to keep you from God...he has already taken care of that for you. Our enemy knows who Jesus is and is unable to stand against him.

If you are struggling with health or know of others struggling as we all do? We must believe that Jesus has the answer on earth and in heaven. If you are struggling with feeling unworthy and unclean because of a human condition...like addiction, AIDS, Jesus is willing to restore emotional, physical, social, and spiritual health. He has come for us who were/are sick.

He has come to forgive sin. In him, our greatest need is met. The need for forgiveness and reconciliation with God. And it is breathtaking to know he had to **die a horrible death** for us to live. **He was buried** but did not stay in the grave. He **rose again** and today **lives in our hearts** as he promised.

So what is the breathtaking view of our savior for you this morning. Come to the table. Remember. Give thanks.